

Fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK
Consultation response
August 2026

Question 1: Are there any other particular F2 and F3 fireworks products that you think the general public should not be allowed to buy? Please state which products and give your reasons.

The Countryside Alliance is a campaigning organisation advocating for all those who live and work in rural communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to this consultation because we know the improper use of fireworks to be a matter of concern in rural areas.

We recognise that fireworks are an important part of many national, cultural and family celebrations and do not support unnecessary restrictions on their responsible use. However, fireworks can also have significant impacts on livestock, horses, pets and wildlife, as well as posing a risk to thatched and other property, including crops, particularly where they are used unexpectedly or irresponsibly. We therefore support proportionate, evidence-based measures that reduce unnecessary harm while preserving the ability of people to enjoy fireworks responsibly.

We are not aware of any evidence to support adding any other particular F2 or F3 fireworks to Regulation 33 at this stage, although we appreciate that there may be such a case for any types of firework that evidence suggests have a disproportionate impact on animal welfare. Current evidence suggests that the main public concern is not the lawful ownership and use of particular F2 or F3 firework products, but the misuse of such fireworks regardless of their particular type. The 2025 survey on UK public attitudes, experiences, and behaviours regarding fireworks identified:

- 83% of respondents support increasing penalties for antisocial fireworks use, the highest level of support recorded for any proposed regulatory change.
- Only 5% of respondents had witnessed fireworks causing injury and 5% had witnessed damage to property.

These findings highlight that stronger enforcement against illegal and antisocial use of F2 and F3 fireworks is likely to be effective in reducing public harm, perhaps as an alternative to additional bans. The survey also highlights that fireworks continue to be widely enjoyed, when used responsibly:

- 74% of respondents said they enjoy fireworks.
- 83% of respondents attended or intended to attend an organised public display.
- 71% of respondents opposed a ban on organised fireworks displays.

Restricting additional F2 and F3 products without proper evidence of necessity may reduce customer choice and affect legitimate celebrations, while doing little to address the behaviours that the public identify as the principal concern.

The Countryside Alliance therefore advocates prioritising effective enforcement of existing legislation and proportionate regulation based on specific evidence of risk. If such evidence

exists, it should be presented as part of the case for additional regulation. Absent such evidence, the priority should be to enforce existing legislation effectively and tackling antisocial use to preserve public enjoyment of fireworks while limiting harm and distress to others.

Question 2: If more products are added to the regulation 33 banned list, what consequences might there be for consumers, industry, enforcement authorities, professional users, and others? Please give your reasons.

For consumers, additional restrictions would reduce the range of products available for lawful private use and may disproportionately affect those in rural areas, where organised public displays can be less accessible than in urban areas. Further restricting access to these products would affect a significant number of responsible fireworks users.

Manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and retailers could face additional costs associated with redesigning products and adapting supply chains. Depending upon the implementation timeframe they may also face a need to manage unsold stock.

Enforcement authorities may face increased complexity and barriers to productivity unless the revised categorisations/definitions are clear and easy to navigate. Trading Standards, Border Force and the police would need updated guidance to enforce revised categorisations effectively.

The Countryside Alliance recognises that the Regulation 33 prohibited list should be extended where there is clear, product-specific evidence of risk to animal welfare, buildings or community wellbeing that cannot be managed through existing legislation and enforcement. Without such evidence, additional product bans under the Regulation 33 list may impose costs on responsible, law-abiding consumers and businesses without addressing the antisocial behaviours that are the main cause of public concern.

Question 3: Do you agree that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is banned from sale to the general public?

Agree.

The Countryside Alliance supports legislation that is clear, consistent and easy to understand for consumers, retailers and enforcement authorities. If the purpose of the proposed amendment is to clarify the existing legal position, rather than introduce a new category of prohibited fireworks, then it is logical to make the wording explicit. Clear legislation benefits all parties by reducing ambiguity, and it should also improve consistency in enforcement.

This amendment should not be used to extend the scope of the existing regulation beyond what is currently proposed without separate evidence and consultation. The government's 2025 survey displays that public concern is primarily focussed on how fireworks are used rather than the design of particular products, with 83% of respondents supporting increased penalties for antisocial fireworks offences. Yet, with 83% of respondents attending or intending to attend organised fireworks displays, any legislative amendments should be

proportionate and targeted to ensure improved legal clarity without restricting responsible use.

The Countryside Alliance therefore supports this proposal to the extent that it provides greater legal clarity and consistency but would oppose a substantial expansion of the products prohibited from sale to the public under Regulation 33 in the absence of clear evidence of need arising from identifiable risks to animal welfare, buildings and community wellbeing.

Question 4: Do you agree that the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers should be removed?

Agree.

The Countryside Alliance supports removing the age restriction for purchasing Christmas crackers. Christmas crackers are classified as F1 pyrotechnics, the lowest hazard category, and are widely recognised as a traditional seasonal product rather than a conventional firework. The risk of use is substantially lower than that of F2 and F3 consumer fireworks, and there appears to be minimal evidence to suggest the current age restriction delivers a meaningful benefit to public safety.

The government should ensure that regulatory controls are aligned with the level of risk presented by specific pyrotechnic products. Applying an identical regulatory approach to Christmas crackers as to consumer fireworks creates unnecessary complexity without measurable public benefit. We are not aware of any evidence that Christmas crackers present a level of risk sufficient to justify an age restriction on their purchase.

Removing the age restriction for Christmas crackers would simplify regulation and would allow enforcement bodies to focus their (often limited) resources on higher-risk cases and on tackling illegal or antisocial use.

The Countryside Alliance therefore supports the removal of the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers as a sensible and proportionate measure which reflects their low hazard classification and allows enforcement efforts to remain focused on areas of greater public concern.

Question 5: Are there any other specific F1 and P1 pyrotechnics that should have their regulatory requirements increased or decreased? Please state which products, what regulatory requirements you think they should have and give your reasons.

While we appreciate that P2 pyrotechnics do not fall within the scope of these proposals, the Countryside Alliance would counsel against any future changes to the P2 category regulatory requirements that would compromise the ability of farmers to make use of bird scarers when needed for non-lethal crop protection.

Question 6: Do you agree the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered? Choose one of the following options:

- *No, the maximum noise limit for fireworks should remain at 120 dB (A,imp)*

- *Yes, to 110 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately half)*
- *Yes, to 100 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately three-quarters)*
- *Yes, to 90 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately seven-eighths)*
- *Don't know*

Yes, to 110dB (A,imp)

The Countryside Alliance agrees that the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered and suggests a reduction to 110dB (A,imp), although we are not wedded to that specific level. Noise disturbance caused by fireworks displays is a matter of public concern, causing distress to animals and vulnerable people. In the government's 2025 survey, 88% of those who said they did not enjoy fireworks cited noise.

Noise disturbance from private fireworks displays is a prominent issue in rural communities, especially for owners of animal facilities who receive little or no prior notice of private displays. This causes harm to livestock and working animals, particularly those who are extremely noise-sensitive, such as horses. Furthermore, loud private displays often disturb similarly noise-sensitive pets. This is again evidenced in the government's survey which shows 91% of those who dislike firework noise citing impacts to animals.

The Countryside Alliance therefore supports lowering the decibel level of fireworks legally available to consumers to 110dB, reducing perceived noise by half. This proposal would help protect members of the public, working animals, livestock and pets from the unnecessary distress currently caused by firework noise. While we are not wedded to the level of 110dB, we suggest that evidence from the sector be carefully consulted to ensure that the permitted level is not made so low as to compromise the enjoyment of private displays, particularly in rural communities where access to large-scale public events can be more difficult.

Question 7: What might be the positive impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

The Countryside Alliance acknowledges that reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the public has the potential to bring positive impacts, particularly where it reduces unnecessary disturbance to people and animals while allowing fireworks to continue to play a role in celebrations and community events.

The government's 2025 survey on public attitudes demonstrates that noise is the principal concern associated with fireworks, with 91% of those who disliked noise saying that it was because of its negative effects on animals. Answers also identified impacts on the peace and quiet of communities (71%) and on vulnerable people (68%).

In rural areas, quieter fireworks may also help reduce distress caused to livestock, horses, pets and wildlife. It is right to distinguish between organised public displays and private displays. While owners can take steps to prepare animals for planned displays, for instance by planning to keep livestock at distance or house them indoors, they can do little to prepare for private displays where they may receive no prior warning. Therefore, any reduction in

noise could contribute to improved animal welfare. A reduction in maximum noise levels may also reduce discontent within local communities and improve public acceptance of responsible firework use, helping balance enjoyment of fireworks with the interests of those who are affected by excessive noise.

The Countryside Alliance recognises that the extent of these benefits depends upon the level at which any revised limit is set and whether the reduction is sufficient to produce real-world improvements without diminishing the enjoyment of fireworks. Any reduction in maximum decibel levels should therefore be evidence-based, combining tighter product standards with effective enforcement against antisocial use to protect the interests of people and animals.

Question 8: What might be the negative impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the public may prove less satisfying to consumers, with fireworks being valued for their combined visual and auditory experience. The government's 2025 survey found, of those who enjoy fireworks, 95% cited visual effects and 48% of respondents recognised that they bring people together. If the performance of consumer fireworks is significantly reduced, so could their role in family and community celebrations, particularly in rural areas where there is often limited access to public displays.

There is also a risk that reducing the permitted decibel level may not significantly reduce disturbance to livestock, horses, or wildlife if fireworks continue to be used unexpectedly and/or irresponsibly. Sudden flashes of light can cause similar distress to animals as noise does currently. Noise reduction alone may not fully address the concerns and issues experienced by rural communities and animal owners.

Furthermore, we understand that nearly all fireworks used in the UK are imported. There is therefore a question as to whether and to what extent offshore manufacturers will be prepared to adapt their product ranges to continue to serve the UK market, and a risk that in the absence of widespread adaption there may be negative impacts on availability and price.

The Countryside Alliance therefore believes that any reduction in the maximum decibel level should be based on evidence that it would deliver measurable benefit for people and animals without significantly reducing the enjoyment of responsible consumers.

Question 9: How much lead in time would businesses need to prepare for the changes proposed in this consultation and why? Please state a lead in time in months or years, and explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

The Countryside Alliance takes no position on this matter. However, we recognise that there are competing factors, including the desire to realise the benefits of new requirements swiftly, giving the industry (including offshore manufacturers) sufficient time to adapt production and supply, and minimising the risk that wholesalers and retailers are left holding unsaleable stock.

Question 10: What other things should we consider when setting a lead in time? You may wish to reference the impact on people who buy fireworks, enforcement bodies, police or the general public.

[No response]